

Message Text

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11
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AGR-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 EB-11 COME-00 IO-13 RSR-01 /128 W
----- 070456

R 270905Z JUL 73
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7711
INFO USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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EO 11652: N/A
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SUBJ: NEW IMAGE FOR TACHAI

REF: HONG KONG 6393; HONG KONG WR 27

SUMMARY. TACHAI, THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE MODEL OF SELF-RELIANCE WHICH WAS HARD HIT BY DROUGHT THIS YEAR, IS NOW BEING HELD UP AS A MODEL OF SELF-RELIANCE IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE START OF A CAMPAIGN FOR NATIONAL EMULATION. END SUMMARY

1. TACHAI, THE PRC'S MODEL FOR SELF-RELIANCE IN AGRICULTURE IS GETTING A NEW IMAGE THIS YEAR--AS THE MODEL FOR SELF-SACRIFICE. A MONTH AGO, NCNA ACKNOWLEDGED IN LOW KEY THAT THE TACHAI BRIGADE HAD SUFFERED HARD LUCK WITH DROUGHT AND WAS BEING KEPT GOING BY "WATER CARRIED FROM ELSEWHERE"(REFTELS). NOW, IN CONSECUTIVE, LENGTHLY ARTICLES ON JULY 25 AND 26, NCNA HAS FEATURED TACHAI'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE WORST DROUGHT TO HIT THE AREA "IN LIVING MEMORY." THIS LOOKS LIKE THE BEGINNING OF A CAMPAIGN IN WHICH TACHAI'S LATEST EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH ADVERSITY WILL BE HELD UP FOR NATIONAL EMULATION.

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WM JUDGING FROM WHAT NCNA THUS FAR HAS SAID, SUCH A CAMPAIGN

WOULD EMPHASIZE THAT (A) TACHAI ITSELF POSSESSED SUFFICIENT IRRIGATION FOR MOST OF HIS FIELDS AS A RESULT OF WATER CONSERVANCY PROJECTS CONSTRUCTED EARLIER (IE, TACHAI WAS PREPARED FOR ADVERSITY, AND REMAINS SELF-RELIANT. THIS IS A SINE QUA NON IF TACHAI'S SITUATION IS NOT TO BECOME AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE REGIME). BUT (B) OTHER NEIGHBORING BRIGADES WERE HARD UP FOR WATER, AND TO CONSERVE IT FOR THEM TACHAI DECIDED TO FORGO USE OF ITS FAMOUS CANAL AND RESERVOIR, PUMP WELLS AND STORAGE PITS, AND TO CARRY WATER FROM A DISTANCE BY SHOULDER POLE" AND EVEN IN JARS AND WASH BASINS." (WATERED IN THIS FASHION, SOWING REQUIRED UP TO TEN TIMES NORMAL LABOR INPUT, ACCORDING TO NCNA). THUS, TACHAI ADOPTED THE "OVERALL VIEW, THE INTEREST OF THE REVOLUTION AS A WHOLE," AND FOSTERED THE MOTTO "IN ORDER TO HELP OTHERS, WE WILL LEAVE DIFFICULTIES TO OURSELVES."

3. IN HOLDING TACHAI UP NOW AS A MODEL OF SELF-SACRIFICE, THE REGIME PROBABLY HOPES TO DO MORE THAN OFFER A NATIONAL SYMBOL FOR THE HARD STRUGGLE WAGED AGAINST WIDESPREAD NATURAL ADVERSITIES IN AGRICULTURE LAST WINTER AND THIS SPRING. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE NEW TACHAI IMAGE MORE IMPORTANTLY WILL BE USED TO PERSUADE AREAS THAT ARE RELATIVELY WELL-OFF IN THIS YEAR'S HARVEST TO SHARE GENEROUSLY AND CONSUME FRUGALLY (IE COUGH UP MORE GRAIN TO THE STATE AND SHARE RESOURCES IN THE COMMON INTEREST). AS WE HAVE FELT FROM THE OUTSET, WHEN THE PRC'S AGRICULTURAL WORRIES BEGAN TO MOUNT LAST YEAR, THE TASK OF GRAIN DISTRIBUTION MAY BE A TRICKY POLITICAL ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM. ANOTHER ASPECT WHICH HAS SUBSEQUENTLY EMERGED IS THE REALLOCATING OF RESOURCES FROM OTHER SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURE. TACHAI'S NEW SYMBOLISM COULD APPLY HERE, AS WELL.

4. IN ITS NEW SYMBOLISM, TACHAI IS A REAL-LIFE ENACTMENT OF THE SELF-SACRIFICE IN AGRICULTURAL STRUGGLE THAT WAS DRAMATIZED IN "ODE TO DRAGON RIVER," A NEW OPERA WHICH APPEARED AT THE END OF 1971. THE THEME OF CONCERN FOR GRAIN ALSO RUNS THROUGH A NEW OPERA WHICH PREMIERED THIS YEAR, "FIGHTING ON THE PLAINS" (HONG KONG A-202).
DEAN

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